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In the claims:

Please amend the claims as shown below:

1. (Currently amended) A method for the ~~pretreatment~~ pre-
5 treatment of chips, comprising:
~~that are fed~~ feeding the chips to a sulphate cooking process
where the chips are heated with steam in a steam treatment and
are thereafter formed into a slurry with an alkali
impregnation fluid before cooking in ~~the~~ a digester,
10 ~~characterised in that~~ adding an acidic fluid
~~is added~~ to the chips in association with the ~~heating by~~
steam treatment in an amount ~~the~~ that gives the chips at least
a five-fold, ~~preferably at least a ten-fold,~~ increase in ~~the~~
an ionic concentration of hydrogen ions at ~~the~~ an end of the
15 steam treatment compared to steam treatment without ~~the~~
~~addition of~~ adding the acidic fluid, ~~whereby the~~ and
reducing a final pH of the chips ~~is reduced~~ by at least 0.5
units ~~and preferably at least 1 unit.~~
2. (Currently amended) The method according to claim
20 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the acidic
fluid has a pH that does not exceed 4-5, and ~~in that~~ the
acidic treatment fluid is at least partially added in a
pressurised steam treatment vessel, at a pressure in the
25 vessel that exceeds that of ~~the~~ a surrounding atmosphere by at
least 0.5-2 bar.
3. (Currently amended) The method according to claim
30 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the acidic
fluid has a pH that does not exceed 4-5, and ~~in that~~ the
acidic treatment fluid is partially added at least in a vessel
at atmospheric pressure or at a slightly higher pressure, at a
pressure in the vessel that exceeds that of ~~the~~ a surrounding
atmosphere by between 0 and 0.5 bar.

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4. (Currently amended) The method according to claim
2, ~~characterised in that the~~ wherein a volume
of the added acidic fluid relative to ~~the~~ a volume of the
5 chips does not exceed 2:1.
5. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~any one of the~~
~~preceding claims, characterised in that~~ claim
1 wherein the alkali impregnation fluid in which the heated
10 and acidified chips are formed into a slurry is constituted by
a sulphide-rich liquor.
6. (Currently amended) The method according to claim
5, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the alkali
15 impregnation fluid is constituted by a mixture of at least one
of a sulphide-rich white liquor, sulphide-rich black liquor,
and/or sulphide-rich green liquor, and ~~that~~ the alkali
impregnation fluid has a molarity of HS^- that exceeds 0.15
mol/liter ~~mol/litre, preferably one that exceeds 0.25~~
20 ~~mol/litre.~~
7. (Currently amended) The method according to claim
6, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the alkali
impregnation fluid has a molarity of NaOH that does not exceed
25 0.75 mol/liter ~~mol/litre, preferably one that does not exceed~~
~~0.5 mol/litre.~~
8. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~any one of the~~
~~preceding claims, characterised in that~~ claim
30 1 wherein the heating by steam of the chips together with the
added acidic fluid takes place during a period of 1-20
minutes, ~~preferably 5-10 minutes~~ and at a temperature in ~~the~~ a
range of 80-120°C.